

Nuclear Committee wants Entergy to pay final bill

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A warrant article pertaining to the decommissioning of the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station in Plymouth has been submitted for the March 2016 annual Town Meeting by Duxbury's Nuclear Advisory Committee.

The committee met last week to finalize the language and items contained within the proposed article, which addresses the implications of Entergy's decision to shut down the nuclear plant, as well as Duxbury's role in that process. On November 30 at the Duxbury Senior Center, the committee reviewed and amended the content of the warrant article in order to submit it for the December 1 deadline. The article is a series of items intended to protect both the short and long-term interests of the Duxbury and its citizens. Committee co-chairman Mary Lampert said it was important for the public to understand what the significant issues are regarding Pilgrim's closing and that the remaining period before shutdown is a potentially dangerous time.

"It is important to get the conversation going in all the towns that have an interest... to start thinking about what it means once Pilgrim has closed," Lampert said. "There are serious issues to consider and we list them in this article."

Lampert hopes that local residents "will become engaged and contact their elected officials, both here and in Washington, and also the NRC, and start being active citizens because everyone who's here has a stake in their property values, in their futures." The proposed warrant article contains language advocating that Entergy, the licensee of Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station, and not taxpayers pay for the decommissioning process in full. It also proposes that the site be returned to "greenfield," meaning the area will be cleaned of radioactive and chemical contamination and returned to the condition it was in prior to the plant's construction.

Further, the article suggests that a council on decommissioning be formed upon the plant's closure for the purpose of overseeing the process in cooperation with state government agencies, elected officials from Plymouth and Barnstable counties and citizen groups from the area's impacted communities. It also requires that the council on decommissioning hold public meetings. Other important provisions of the article include beginning decommissioning as soon as possible following closure, rather than deferring cleanup and dismantlement for up to 60 years as current standards permit, as well as removing spent fuel rods from their current containment pool and placing them into safer, more permanent on-site storage. Another item maintains that until the spent fuel pool is closed, Entergy shall retain offsite emergency plans and continue to provide necessary funding.

As of 2014, which is the last date that data is publically available, Entergy's decommissioning fund for Pilgrim had \$896 million dollars in it. Lampert said that considering that Vermont Yankee required an estimated \$1.2 billion dollars for cleanup and closure, the larger Pilgrim plant will likely require an even greater amount. Any shortfall in the fund may have to be accounted for by the taxpayer unless Senate Bill S. 1798 passes. That bill was endorsed by

Duxbury's Town Meeting this year and would force Entergy/ Pilgrim to pay a \$25 million dollar post-closure fee annually.

The nuclear committee will make a presentation on its article to the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee, seeking their endorsements. The article does not require any funds. Upon hearing about the committee's warrant article, Director of the Council on Aging Joanne Moore requested that the committee form a panel and hold an event open to the public so that Duxbury residents may learn about the committee, their article, and their work. That event is being scheduled for some time in January at the Senior Center. The Nuclear Advisory Committee's next meeting will be in January.